

know whether I told you that latterly, to save themselves trouble, they got into the habit of flinging me into the fountain stark naked; but, as I think I mentioned, I became quite expert at balancing myself on the top of the jet. Last night, when the slaves had departed, I put my hands over my head and projected myself into the air, endeavouring to fall clear of the basket, which I did. In a moment I scrambled over the marble coping, and I think the pasha was dozing, for he made no motion either to stop me or to call his slaves. I was afraid my brain would play me a trick, and so I acted with intense celerity. In a moment I was at his throat and had him pinioned and helpless on his back. Gripping his windpipe with my left hand, I undid his scarf with my right, and soon had it bowstrung round his neck—"

"You surely did not strangle him?" cried the consul horrified.

"Oh, no, I shouldn't think of doing such a thing. I have great respect for the position of pasha. I gagged him so that he could not cry out, and tied his hands so that he could not clap them together. Then, with some difficulty, I stripped him, and dressed myself in his clothes. He seemed stunned very much by the suddenness of my onslaught; and seeing that he was too panic-stricken to cry out, I ungagged him, and unbound his hands. Then picking him up—all the time I was struggling with him, remember, I saw three pashas, my brain wobbling about like loose nails in a rolling barrel; but I steadily concentrated my attention on the middle pasha, and resolved to attend to the other two afterwards if they should still be there—picking him up, then, as I say, I flung him, back downward, into the basket, and before you could snap your fingers, he was dancing on the waterspout high above the palm trees. The other two pashas had gone up with him; and so folding his robes around me, I walked calmly down the passage, through the monkey Court, along the other passage, through the Court of Palms, and so out into the street, unimpeded, the watchman opening the gate for me and

closing it behind me without a word. That is the beauty of having well-trained servants, unaccustomed to question any act a man does. From there I came directly to your residence, and here I remain until you can get me on shipboard."

"But McSimmins, you don't mean to say you left the pasha there all night?"

"I have but followed his own Arabic text, which you will find engraved around his fountain. I have given him water, and plenty of it. It was not for me to interfere further. I did not tell you last night, fearing you might consider it your duty to intervene. If the pasha likes his position at the top of the fountain, he has doubtless remained there; and I can assure him from experience, that it will take him several days to learn to make the dive I made."

"Oh, but this is most serious, McSimmins, taking the law into your own hands in that way and endangering the person of the pasha."

"I took the pasha into my own hands, but there is no law in his caravansary, and I didn't like to trouble my government over a small personal matter like this, knowing they would talk a good deal and do nothing. And, after all, one cannot pay a greater compliment to his host than to follow his example."

"I must send down at once and see what is the outcome of this."

"Certainly," returned McSimmins; "it would only be a neighbourly thing to do."

But at that moment the gorgeous kawass rapped at the consul's door. "Excellency," he said, a thrill of fear in his quivering voice, "news has come that the Pasha Zimri has been found drowned in his own fountain. Mysterious are the ways of Allah, the good pasha is gone."

"Ah," said McSimmins grimly, "every situation has its compensations. If he has had too much water in this world, it is not likely that he will have to complain of an over-supply in the next."

The Agony of Learning Golf

THE other day Mr. Balfour declared, says M.A.P., that golf is not a game for old gentlemen. "It is," he said, "a game for young people, and unless you begin it when young you will never enjoy the full glory of it when you are old." I used to be a golfophobe. I despised golf. I sneered at my golfophil friends. To me golf and senility were synonymous. But last summer a young Irishman converted me. His exuberant eulogy of the game excited my curiosity and I bought a bagful of strange weapons with strange names. Instantly the devil of golf entered into my soul and took possession of me. No longer was I master of myself. The things which formerly engrossed me became stale and flat. For nearly a year I have grieved over my wasted youth. The past is past, but I bitterly repent the hours squandered on idle work and unprofitable play. I sorrow over the memory of holidays squandered wantonly. Fiercely I think of weeks and weeks and weeks that were utterly null and void, although before my unseeing eyes stretched the reproaching links. "Yes, I have even walked ignorantly over undiscovered paradises in all parts of the world. I have vacuously gazed at golfers year after empty year, and in my besotted folly failed to grasp the skirts of happy chance. For all my other sins I can forgive myself, but for this sin, never. Reader, there is only one kind of remorse that is intolerable. It is the remorse of the golfer who has not teed a ball in his teens. Other omissions may be buried in oblivion. We can forget the kiss that was not taken in the moonlight, the word that was not uttered in the conservatory, all the women we have not married, the bargain that was not bought, the sight that was not seen. But we can never forget the years that might have been and were not consecrated to golf.

There is, however, one grain of sugar in your cup of gall. The basis of golf is suffering, and the young golfer suffers more than the mature golfer. Youth plays the game with levity, but manhood plays it with the passionate solemnity of a minor prophet. The fun of golf is due to the torture of mental conflict with perverse matter. Youth misses the awful joy of misdirected toil. It learns golf too easily to taste the true ecstasy of torment. The man who has achieved success in other forms of activity such as trade, politics, painting, literature, or football, finds to his horror when he faces the teeing box that all his knowledge is a vain thing. Even a king

(like Alfonso) becomes a poor creature. Even a Prime Minister (like Mr. Balfour) is a bungler. Feverishly the successful merchant grasps his driver and embarks upon the sea of unfathomable failure. No cunning avails. No wisdom profiteth. For he who would conquer the imp of golf must become a little child. He must abase his pride in the dust. He must expose his folly to the world. He must make a public laughing-stock of his grey hairs. It is said that Lord Chancellor Campbell took dancing lessons at the age of thirty-four, but he took them, like Nicodemus, in stealthy private under an assumed name. The eminent man who condemns golf cannot hope to learn the dreadful sport in secret. He must perform his grotesque contortions in public. He must endure the furtive grin of the caddie and the simulated gravity of the club verandah. He must not only make an ass of himself, but he must also feel an ass and be an ass for months and even years. There is no other game which manufactures the habitually and contentedly incompetent. Many men delight in golf who know that they are living monuments of incapacity. Indeed, the worse you play the game, the more you enjoy it.

It is generally believed that Ananias was an angler. I don't believe it. He was a golfer. No other game places so severe a strain on the moral nature. An incompetent angler is a conscious liar. An incompetent golfer is an unconscious liar. In the early agonies of golf two and three make four. It is too much to ask the most upright man to count accurately the blows he deals at a ball in a bunker. Before we idolise George Washington, we ought to reflect that he never played golf. After three blind swipes in a bunker, you feel that man was not made for arithmetic, but that arithmetic was made for man. How can you count when you cannot see? How can you add up when you are a runaway windmill in a sandstorm?

It has recently been stated that to find an English-speaking people among whom poetry is an incident of everyday life, one must go to Australia and New Zealand. In Australia, it is said, they want to read poetry. In New Zealand they want to write it. But is it strange that in a land which Mr. Kipling has called "last, loneliest, loveliest, exquisite, apart," the inhabitants should turn to gentle thoughts of rhythmic expression?